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the contrary, held to be holy and given special care.[8] They mentioned nevertheless that women of child-bearing age refrained from eating the two strips of flesh along the anterior of the backbone of buffalo lest twins result. 845 [262]

Coming Daylight said that she had heard of cases in the old days where twins would be separated,—one kept by the parents and the other adopted by someone else. Personally, however, she did not approve of this policy and when her daughter-in-law gave birth to twins she told her: "Be proud of them. Dress them alike and they will grow up well. Don't think more of one than of the other." She gave the same advice to her granddaughter when she in turn bore twins. The advice was not heeded in this instance and both the granddaughter and her husband adored one and neglected the other so that Coming Daylight herself took the neglected one. These twins were not quite a year old when the one loved by its parents died.

A middle-aged woman said that she had always heard regarding twins that they should be treated just alike and that the mother should always take both wherever she went and never leave one behind. Her own experience was a sad one. When her twins were about seven months old, one of them got sick and she had to take it to the hospital. The people at Hays told her: "You shouldn't leave one twin here." She, however, wanted to stay with the sick one, but the doctors sent her home. The twin left in the hospital died and people told her: "You shouldn't have left one there without the other."

Pregnancy and Childbirth

The only indication from these two oldest women informants of belief in prenatal impression was the remark of Coming Daylight when telling the story of a young man who opened the belly of a deer he had killed and found therein two young, each of which had "human faces." She said: "So they concluded that even animals get afraid and the young are marked." A younger woman mentioned that she had heard that if a pregnant woman looks at some- 843 825 843

[8] Kroeber, 1908, p. 182, gives the special names by which twins were called.

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843 thing unusual it will affect her child and, further, that a woman in that condition should not look upon a corpse.

[845] Coming Daylight could not remember any cases of stillborn children, but finally Singer recalled that a woman, whom they both had known, had borne triplets which were dead at birth. Incidentally, this was the only case of triplets of which either had ever heard.

Certain prenatal care was taken to ensure easy delivery and healthy offspring. It was often mentioned that in the old days pregnant women were well taken care of. Coming Daylight explained it thus: " In those days a man usually had several wives so that the one who happened to be pregnant was looked after by the others and didn't have to work hard. She was not supposed to do any cooking, and, if it were absolutely necessary that she cook, she must wear something like a heavy apron to protect her lest the afterbirth stick. During hot weather she was supposed to wear a robe on her back, because they claimed that the heat was hard on the breasts. She was not allowed to pack heavy loads. They believed that she should work, but not enough to wear herself out. She was taught to take certain precautions. My grandmother, especially, would tell me, when I was pregnant, such things as: 'If you have to change sides while lying in bed, sit up first and then lie down on the other side. Don't just roll over, or the cord will wrap around the infant's head. When you leave your lodge, you mustn't stand in the door, you must go right through, so the baby will come quickly. Never back into a lodge because that will make the infant come the wrong way.' "

Coming Daylight claimed that she always got along well in childbirth because her infants were small and she followed the advice given her. Her firstborn was the most difficult, as is usual for most women, but her husband was a very fine, mature man who hadn't let her do anything to injure herself during pregnancy. Furthermore he followed the customary Gros Ventre abstention, being " very careful especially during the last month, when Gros Ventre men refrain absolutely from intercourse with their pregnant wives lest, when the infant is born, it be covered with a lot of ' white lard-like stuff.' "

[805] [211] The length of gestation was counted by moons. If, for in-

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stance, it was the dark of the moon when a woman ceased menstruation, she kept track of the months by marking with charcoal on a piece of wood, or by notching a stick, each successive time the moon was in that phase and "she would usually estimate it right." 843 805 211

Childbirth usually took place right in the woman's own lodge. Should someone there be sick, he would be moved to another lodge if possible, for while it was considered bad for the sick person to be in the same lodge with a woman in her menses, it was much worse were the woman in labor, for the odor of the blood at delivery would affect the sick person adversely. In fact, a person who had only been near the place where a woman was being delivered was not allowed to come near a person who was ill. If the patient could not be moved, the woman in labor would go to another lodge, preferably to that of her grandmother or of her widowed aunt. She would avoid her own mother's lodge as her father or brothers might be around and she would be "ashamed" to go where they might be. 844 [841]

Although the attitude has somewhat changed now, in former times, according to Coming Daylight and Singer, a pregnant woman was supposed to be reticent regarding her condition right up to the last moment. She might suffer intensely, but "you would never know there was a thing wrong with her." Only when she seemed to be very close to term did they send for a midwife and for some old man or woman who would give her medicine. A male doctor did not touch a woman in labor, but would give her medicine to alleviate the pains. Mary told of her own experience. "There was a well-known doctor of this kind who died about ten years ago. He was blind and, when called on a case, would sit with a pot of medicine beside him. He attended me and when he heard me say I was in pain he would just touch me with the end of the stick and the cramps would go away. Finally I complained that I was tired. The midwife said that it would soon be over, but the old doctor told them: 'No. It hasn't turned yet.' I thought this was strange that he should know this as not only was he blind but he had not touched me. Later on he said: 'It will be about a half hour more.' And he was right." 844 756

Different practitioners have different methods. Singer witnessed the following case. "A man had received power from